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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 BEIJING 001002

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/18/2033

TAGS: PGOV CH

SUBJECT: NO MAJOR SURPRISES IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP DECISIONS,
NEW DEFENSE MINISTER NOT A POLITBURO MEMBER

REF: A. BEIJING 984

- 1B. BEIJING 925
- 1C. BEIJING 898
- 1D. BEIJING 890
- 1E. BEIJING 873
- 1F. BEIJING 809

Classified By: Political Section Internal Unit Chief Dan Kritenbrink.
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary and Comment

11. (C) There were no major surprises in the "elections" for Premier, Vice Premiers and other key State Council (Cabinet) positions at the March 16-17 plenary sessions of China's National People's Congress (NPC). Wen Jiabao was "reelected" Premier, Li Keqiang, Hui Liangyu, Zhang Dejiang and Wang Qishan were "elected" Vice Premiers and former National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) chief Ma Kai was selected as both a State Councillor and the State Council's new Secretary General. The other new State Councillors are Dai Bingguo, Liang Guanglie, Meng Jianzhu and Liu Yandong. Their portfolios were not announced. Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou were "elected" Vice Chairmen of the State Central Military Commission (CMC). In a departure from past practice, Liang Guanglie was elected Minister of National Defense (MND), even though he is not on the Politburo and is only a member, not a Vice Chairman, of both the Party and State Central Military Commissions (CMC). The NPC also "elected" a new President of the Supreme People's Court and new Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate. There was no announcement made for the Chairman of the newly-created National Energy Commission. Comment: This omission may indicate that the leadership has not yet reached a consensus on the energy portfolio created as part of the State Council restructuring approved earlier in the NPC session. End Summary and Comment.

National Election Process Completed

12. (C) On March 16-17, the National People's Congress (NPC) held "elections" for the top State Council (Cabinet) officers and ministers, as well as for the State Central Military Commission (CMC). The election process began on March 15 when the NPC chose the PRC President, Vice President and Chairman of the CMC (Ref A). There were no major surprises. Ma Kai became a State Councillor and the State Council's Secretary-General. (Note. Ma Kai's predecessor Hua Jianmin

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also concurrently held both positions.). Liang Guanglie was elected Minister of National Defense (MND) but was elected only as a member of the CMC and not as a Vice Chairman. (Comment. In what appears to be a downgrading of the clout of the MND, Liang is the first person in at least two decades

to hold that position without concurrently holding Politburo and CMC Vice Chair positions. See Ref D.)

¶13. (C) Wen Jiabao received an uncommonly sustained and enthusiastic round of applause when he took his bows as the newly "re-elected" Premier on March 16, standing up a second time to acknowledge the tribute from the deputies. There were no surprises among the new Vice Premiers and State Councilors, although portfolios were not announced.

¶14. (C) The NPC on March 17 elected four Vice Premiers. New Vice Premier Li Keqiang will most likely take the Executive Vice Premier slot by virtue of his Politburo Standing Committee position. Politburo members Zhang Dejiang and Wang Qishan are the other new Vice Premiers, with Politburo member Hui Liangyu having been "re-elected." It is widely rumored that Zhang will take Wu Yi's trade portfolio and Wang will be given the financial portfolio though there has been no announcement to this effect. Hui Liangyu is expected to retain his agriculture portfolio.

¶15. (C) Five State Councilors were also elected on March 17. Minister of Public Security Meng Jianzhu was elected as State Councilor, along with Politburo member Liu Yandong, new Defense Minister Liang Guanglie, former NDRC Chairman Ma Kai, and former Executive Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo. In his new position, Dai will presumably take over Tang Jiaxuan's portfolio as the government's senior-most official in charge of foreign affairs. Zhou Xiaochuan was re-elected Governor of the PBOC, Yang Jiechi was re-elected Foreign Minister and Zhang Ping, former Deputy Secretary-General of the State Council, was elected to replace Ma Kai as head of the NDRC. There was no announcement made regarding the newly-created National Energy Commission. (Comment. This omission suggests that a decision has not been made on this important position; it may also indicate that the leadership

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has not yet reached a consensus on the energy portfolio that was created as part of the controversial State Council restructuring during this NPC session. Refs B and C). Wang Shengjun was elected President of the Supreme People's Court and Cao Jianming was "elected" new Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate. The NPC also "elected" the Chairmen, Vice Chairmen and members of eight specialized NPC committees.

Process and Atmospherics

¶16. (C) The voting followed the elaborate procedures on display during the election of the PRC President on March 16 (Ref A), with deputies being given the option of filling out their ballots at their desks, or voting "in secret" in a private voting booth, and then depositing their large ballots in designated ballot boxes. Official election monitors stood in the Great Hall to ensure that the ballots were inserted properly and all procedures followed. Deputies were allowed to write-in candidates for the Supreme People's Court and Supreme People's Procuratorate but not for the Premier, other State Council positions or CMC. Xinjiang Party Secretary and Politburo member Wang Lequan, outgoing Procurator-General Jia Chunwang and Central Discipline Inspection Commission Deputy Chairman He Yong, were among the several write-in candidates.

¶17. (SBU) During the balloting downtime, a national minority member of the NPC Standing Committee left her seat on a row above the Politburo and rushed to the side of President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao to seek autographs. When they obliged her request, a second minority deputy began her descent down the stairs only to be quickly turned back by NPC security.

¶18. (SBU) The voting results, as usual, hovered in the high ninetieth percentile for each successful nominee, but

deputies clearly expressed their dissatisfaction with several prominent figures by casting negative votes or abstaining. Ma Kai, for example, received 117 "no" votes for Secretary-General and 110 "no" votes for State Councilor (out

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of nearly 3,000 cast) as opposed to 35, 28, 17, and 4 "no" votes for the other four State Councilors, respectively. The Minister of Railways Liu Zhijun and Minister of Education Zhou Ji, both of whom were "re-elected," received 384 and 211 negative votes, while PBOC Governor Zhou Xiaochuan, also "re-elected," received 156 "no" votes, relatively high compared to their ministerial colleagues.

Vote Totals

¶9. (SBU) The voting results for the Premier, Vice Premiers, State Councilors and key Ministers are as follows:

Name/Item	For	Against	Abstain	Percent
Wen Jiabao (Premier)	2926	21	12	99.9
Li Keqiang (Vice Premier)	2925	10	7	99.4
Hui Liangyu Vice Premier	2921	11	10	99.3
Zhang Dejiang (Vice Premier)	2903	30	9	98.7
Wang Qishan (Vice Premier)	2909	23	10	98.9
Ma Kai (State Councilor)	2796	110	36	95.5
Dai Bingguo (State Councilor)	2909	17	16	98.9
Liu Yandong (State Councilor)	2891	35	16	98.2
Liang Guanglie (State Councilor)	2935	4	3	99.8
Meng Jianzhu (State Councilor)	2906	28	8	98.5
Ma Kai (Secretary-General)	2796	117	27	95.0
Liu Jiayi (State Auditor)	2933	6	3	99.7
Zhou Xiaochuan (Governor PBOC)	2756	156	30	93.7
Yang Jiechi	2927	14	1	99.5

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(Foreign Minister)				
Liang Guanglie (National Defense)	2926	11	5	99.5
Zhang Ping (National Development and Reform Commission)	2897	31	14	98.4
Meng Jianzhu (Public Security)	2914	26	2	99.0
Geng Huichang (State Security)	2937	3	2	99.8

¶10. (SBU) The voting results for the CMC Vice Chairmen and members, President of Supreme People's Court and Director of Supreme People's Procuratorate are as follows:

Name/Item	For	Against	Abstain	Percent
Guo Boxiong (CMC Vice Chair)	2962	5	0	99.8

Xu Caihou (CMC Vice Chair)	2957	7	3	99.7
Liang Guanglie (CMC member)	2956	8	3	99.5
Chen Bingde (CMC member)	2957	5	5	99.7
Li Jinai (CMC member)	2961	2	4	99.8
Liao Xilong (CMC member)	2957	5	5	99.7
Chang Wanquan (CMC member)	2959	6	2	99.7
Jing Zhiyuan (CMC member)	2964	1	2	99.9
Wu Shengli (CMC member)	2953	5	9	99.5
Xu Qiliang (CMC member)	2960	3	4	99.8
Wang Shengjun (Supreme People's Court)	2885	36	44	97.3
Cao Jianming (Supreme People's Procuratorate)	2933	16	17	98.9

Other Ministers

¶11. (SBU) Vote totals for the remaining Ministers and Commission heads are as follows:

Zhou Ji (Education)	2477	384	81
Wan Gang (S & T)	2918	17	7
Li Yizhong (Industry, Information)	2875	53	14
Yang Jing (State Ethnic Affairs Commission)	2936	2	4
Ma Wen (Supervision)	2919	16	7
Li Xueju (Civil Affairs)	2937	3	2
Wu Aiying (Justice)	2924	15	3
Xie Xuren (Finance)	2908	23	11
Yin Weimin (Human Resources, Social Security)	2928	9	5
Xu Shaoshi (Land, Resources)	2918	14	10
Jiang Weixin (Housing, Urban-Rural Construction)	2906	25	11
Li Zhijun (Railways)	2692	211	39
Li Shenglin (Transportation)	2928	8	6
Chen Lei (Water Resources)	2938	4	0
Sun Zhengcai (Agriculture)	2895	37	10
Zhou Shengxian (Environmental Protection)	2903	25	14
Chen Deming (Commerce)	2923	15	4
Cai Wu	2896	28	18

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(Culture)
Chen Zhu 2891 35 16

(Health)
Li Bin
(Population, Family
Planning Commission)
RANDT

2933 6 3